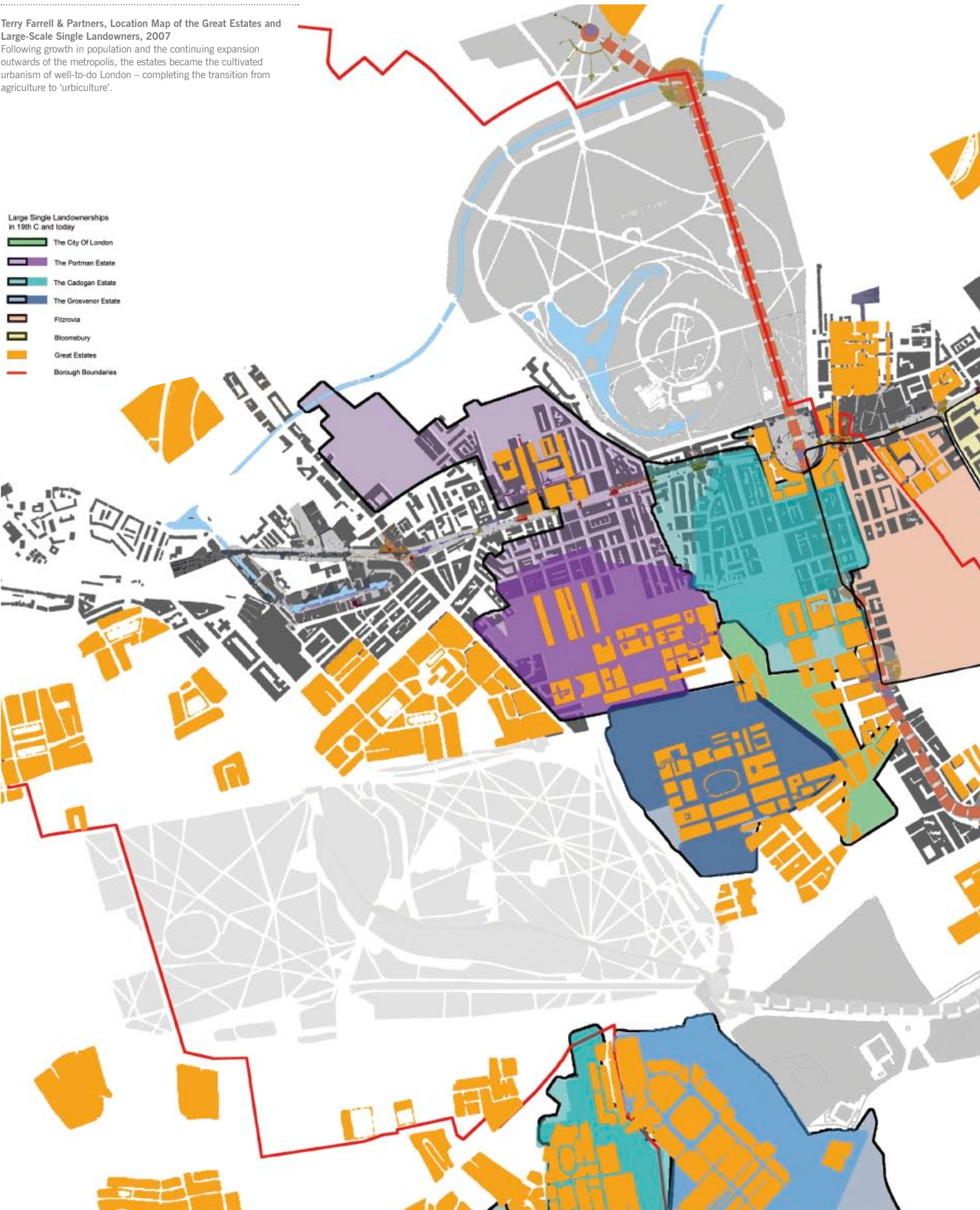


Terry Farrell & Partners, Location Map of the Great Estates and Large-Scale Single Landowners, 2007

Following growth in population and the continuing expansion outwards of the metropolis, the estates became the cultivated urbanism of well-to-do London – completing the transition from agriculture to ‘urbiculture’.

- Large Single Landownerships in 19th C and today
- The City Of London
 - The Portman Estate
 - The Cadogan Estate
 - The Grosvenor Estate
 - Fitzrovia
 - Bloomsbury
 - Great Estates
 - Borough Boundaries



THE ROLE OF THE ESTATES

FROM AGRICULTURE TO URBICULTURE

Large swathes of London's West End remain under the ownership of the Great Estates, with the Grosvenor Estate (Duke of Westminster) owning much of Mayfair and the Cadogan family (Earl of Cadogan) much of Chelsea. **Terry Farrell** looks at how this long-term custodianship has impacted on the development of the fabric of the city and its strong sense of place. He explains how it is a model that he has tried to draw from in his own Earl's Court masterplan.

areas of the capital. At Earl's Court, for example, investment and development company Capital and Counties Properties has worked closely with local communities to understand the current cultural and economic value of the area. This is a place with a thriving, but somewhat unknown, creative centre, a strong Australasian community and a successful business district; it needs careful consideration of its development potential over a long time period, which has been central to the engagement with local communities and stakeholders. Activities such as the imaginary *Time Out* guide to Earl's Court in the year 2030 and the myearlscourt.com website, which has been visited by over 25,000 people, are exemplary ways of engaging in a meaningful way. By taking a proactive and long-term look at what an area could be like 20 years into the future, Capital and Counties has been able to consider its role as urban custodians, as well as developers, in creating a place that will remain successful and thriving through the challenges that London will face in the next two or three decades.

The advantages of this model of landownership are clear to see: an estate with interests in the economic return of an area, half a century or more down the line, takes decisions and produces plans that create places, not just buildings. At Earl's Court, the provision of housing, workplaces, and leisure, creative and community facilities have been central to the long-term success of this most recent of estates. By creating four villages with quite unique characters and carefully considered parks and squares, while providing up to 8,000 new homes, a similar process of stewardship of the urban realm is at work here as in the established estates of the 18th and 19th centuries. Place is created first and foremost, which gives a defined heart to a community, around which is gathered the workplaces, shops and

Terry Farrell & Partners, Earl's Court Masterplan, London, 2011
Farrells' masterplan for Earl's Court in context.



Earl's Court model photo showing Farrells' proposed masterplan.



Farrells' vision for Earl's Court – 'Four Villages and a High Street'.



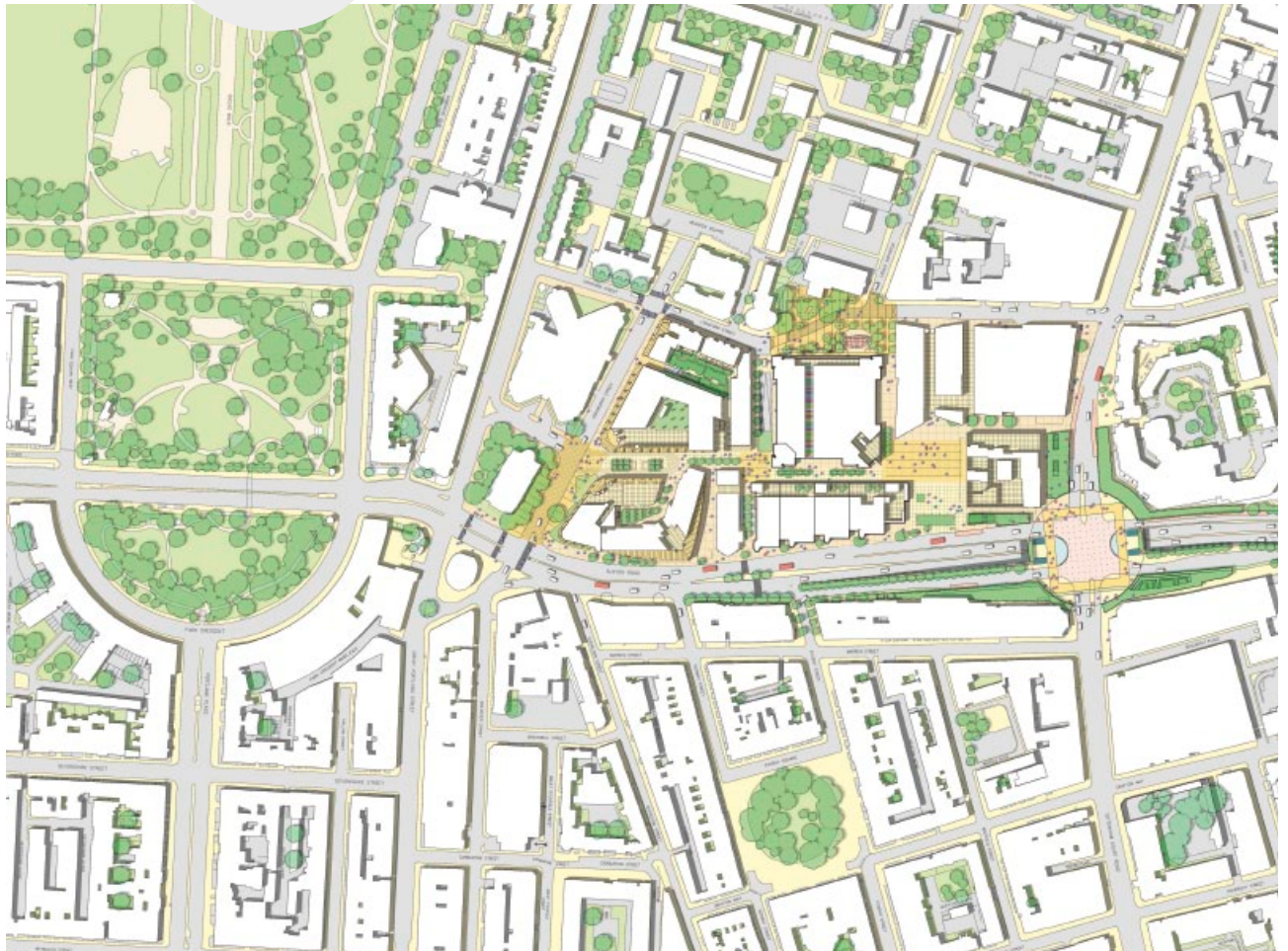
Terry Farrell & Partners, Regent's Place, London, 2010
Farrells' masterplan for Regent's Place in the West End of London.

homes that make a community flourish. By thinking decades into the future, and providing for social changes, Capital and Counties is working to make a place that is a home for both residents and businesses for years, not only in the short term. Like the estates of west-central London, this land along the banks of the lost river 'Counters Creek' has made the progression from agriculture to urbiculture and, through urban stewardship, is being brought back as an established place in the city. Rather than trying to build a place in and of itself, the masterplan Farrells has created seeks to draw on the styles and typologies of existing communities, and integrate them; through this approach their potential can be developed, ensuring that the masterplan remains sympathetic to the local area.

Stewardship requires an understanding of the context that one's land sits in, and an understanding of the position of that

10,000

NUMBER OF WORKERS EACH
WEEK IN REGENT'S PLACE,
A CUT-OFF AREA NOW
RETURNED TO ACTIVE AND
VIBRANT USE



At Regent's Place in the West End, British Land has guided the development of this section of London for 25 years, and has a long-term commitment to the continued success of this location as a newly emerging place for work, leisure and trade.

place within the overall fabric of the city. At Regent's Place in the West End, British Land has guided the development of this section of London for 25 years, and has a long-term commitment to the continued success of this location as a newly emerging place for work, leisure and trade. The work of British Land has seen a previously cut-off section of Central London, home to over 10,000 workers during the week, returned to active and vibrant use. It is positioned to the north of the Euston Road and adjacent to Regents Park, and Farrells' work in advising and establishing an understanding of the situation of the land in historical and contemporary contexts has been key to its current success. Through analysing the relationship of the area to the adjacent West End and Fitzrovia, and careful consideration of the failures in the past to manage pedestrian and traffic flows at the Euston Circus junction with Tottenham Court Road, British Land has been able to influence and stimulate the growth of a new urban place. Large landowners, through their long-term commitment to the establishment of high-value real estate, are recognised as leading contributors to the sustainable urban development of the capital. Organisations such as British Land have won awards for built environment and biodiversity from champions of such causes as the *Guardian* newspaper, and provide excellent examples of how to holistically incorporate the very real agendas of the future into successful business models of land stewardship. Farrells' engagement comes from an approach to the city that sees the organisation of London as based on a pattern of emergent, contextually led planning, as opposed to object-led design. As at Marylebone, where the high street is held up as one of Britain's finest, certainly in terms of its urban qualities and extraordinary mix of uses, so the establishment of high-quality places is key in

Farrells' commercial buildings for 10 and 20 Triton Street, Regent's Place.

contemporary manifestations of a traditional form.

From the first Great Estates of the Crown, through the agricultural-to-urbicultural estates of Howard de Walden, Portman, Grosvenor and others, to the new estates of corporate landowners, a historical continuity exists in the shaping of London through these enlightened custodians of our urban realm. The careful cultivation from an agricultural asset, where crops were planted and nurtured, to an urban one where houses, offices, churches, pubs and all manner of buildings have been sown, cared for and managed over long periods of time, has bequeathed London a unique and internationally significant model for growing our cities. These active, vibrant and dense neighbourhoods are essentially place-based developments whose long-termism is central to their success, and can provide a way to renurture overlooked and underused areas of the capital. As is being seen at King's Cross with the developers Argent, through constructing human-scale places significant organisations can be attracted to settle an area, drawing in associated residents, culture and business. But these require an investment that is long term, committed and able to see the emergence of value, in both assets and cultural capital, decades down the line. The Great Estates of London have proven the benefit of investing in an urban future, and have shaped the capital in a unique and exemplary manner. The challenge for the future of London is to ensure local authorities and other landowners adopt the same approach to the stewardship of the city's urban realm. ▴

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Through far-sighted stewardship and investment in the public realm, British Land has been able to stimulate growth in a previously isolated section of Central London.

